[10th February 1955

SRI V. BALAKRISHNAN :—" Do these loans carry any interest, Sir? "

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" I would like to have notice."

Sale of rice in open market by the producers'-cum-*consumers' co-operative societies in the Malabar district.*

* 583 *Q.*—SRI M. NARAYANA KURUP : Will the Hon. the Minister for Agriculture be pleased to state—

(*a*) the average weekly off-take in ration shops in Malabar before the abolition of control and the zonal system ;

(*b*) the average weekly off-take now ;

(*c*) the prevailing market price of foodgrains in ration shops ;

(*d*) whether the producers'-*cum*-consumers' co-operative societies in Malabar made any representations to the Government to take urgent steps to help them to meet the situation arising out of decontrol ; and

(*e*) if so, the action taken thereon?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" (*a*) 2,864 tons. (This is the average figure for the period from 2nd January to 10th July 1954.)

" (*b*) 507 tons. (This is the average figure for the period from 29th August to 16th October 1954.)

" (*c*) Rice, I sort, Rs. 21–12–0 and rice, II sort, Rs. 17–4–0 (per Imperial maund).

" (*d*) & (*e*) Representations have been received from a number of producers'-*cum*-consumers' co-operative societies in Malabar district requesting the Government that they might be permitted to sell the stocks of rice with them in the open market at reduced rate. As the sale of rice at reduced rate would entail heavy loss to Government, the Government could not comply with the above request. The Government have, however, taken the following steps to dispose of the stocks as quickly as possible :—

(i) Instructions have been issued to the Collector of Malabar to permit the producers'-*cum*-consumers' co-operative societies to sell raw rice in unlimited quantities and to take over the stocks from such of the retail societies, which were unwilling to continue in foodgrain business.

(ii) The Government have decided to hand over the surplus stocks of rice and paddy in the State to the Government of India and the Government of India have actually started taking over the surplus stocks from Madras City. The unwanted surplus stocks with the producers'-*cum*-consumers' co-operative societies will thus be handed over to the Government of India shortly."

10th February 1955]

SRI M. NARAYANA KURUP :—" May I know the present stock of foodgrains held by these societies? "

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" I do not have that information."

SRI K. KUNHI MOHAMED SHAFEE :—" May I know whether any of the societies have represented to the Government to take over their present stock and if so the reason for the inordinate delay in the Government taking over the stocks? "

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" I may tell the hon. Member that there is no avoidable delay. Government are taking every step to expedite the taking over of stock from those societies which are anxious to dispose of."

SRI T. C. NARAYANAN NAMBIAR :—" Are the Government aware that hundreds and hundreds of bags of rice are kept unused in the godowns of the various co-operative societies? Even if the Government expedite the process of taking over, by the time it is actually disposed of by export or otherwise, it will become still more rotten. I have seen that the stock is already rotten and its export will only earn a bad name to this State. Who is responsible for not heeding to the representations made by the various co-operative societies to allow the sale of this rice at a lower price? "

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" The hon. Member is aware that the decontrol decision was taken by the Government of India suddenly. Since then, this Government have been taking every step to dispose of the stock remaining with the societies and fair price shops. Wherever deterioration in the quality of rice has been brought to the notice of the Government, they have been arranging to get the stock disposed of even by calling for tenders."

SRI M. NARAYANA KURUP :—" The Hon. Minister said that the sale of the rice at the open market rate or the reduced rate would entail loss to Government. Because the off-take in these societies has fallen to a fourth of what it was before, there is a large quantity of surplus stock, on whose value the Government collect interest at 4 per cent and many societies are incurring loss on this account. Will the Government see that they either dispose of the stock or order the waiver of the collection of interest on the value of the surplus stocks? "

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" I have already answered that the Government of India have agreed to take over the entire stock and that the taking over has already commenced. Regarding the charging of interest, I shall look into the question."